

Ingo Baumgarten; concept statement for the painting “What became of them?”



100 x 120cm, oil on canvas, 2026,

The exhibition commemorates the division of Korea, since already 73 years!
That is a long time, several generations!

When I started to think about this theme, very soon memories of an old photo -work popped up, which I had made more than 30 years ago. In the photo-book “Remarques sur le chemin à l’atelier” (“notes on the way to the studio”) I integrated the picture of the entrance of an “modernist” settlement of the 1950th, with an aged concrete sign, requesting to “drive carefully, 2000 children!”

the project on the website

I wondered, what became of those children, 30-or 40 years after that sign was installed!



Je n'ai aucune idée de qui était Marcel Cachin, dont cette cité porte le nom, cité intéressante pour étudier les concepts modernistes des années cinquante. D'ailleurs je me demande que sont devenus les deux mille enfants pour lesquels le panneau de l'époque recommande de rouler doucement.

Picture with comment (in French) from the catalog
for the exhibition “pensees du dehors” of 1993/94



modern picture of the same place, ca 2010
the old sign still stands

At the time I also wondered who was *Marcel Cachin*, whose name was given to this settlement. Now, within a few seconds, Google and Wikipedia tell me, that Marcel Cachin (1869 -1958) has been one of the founders of French Communist Party and editor of the newspaper “L’humanité”.

Children become adults and change and become old.
Playgrounds are addressing the children, and they reflect the time and the conditions of society!

In my own childhood, in divided Germany, in West and East also playgrounds showed differences, for example the design of climbing frames had been diverse.
I assume playgrounds in North-and South Korea are also different.



In Eastern Germany, one could find sometimes climbing-frames in shape of rockets, celebrating “progress”, the space-race or military power, in which the socialist countries had strong ambitions. Such play equipment aimed to spread out ideology to the youngest already.

What became of those children, shaped by such games?

For nostalgic reasons, some people still feel connected. Some document and take care of this old, often hand-crafted playground equipment; even restoring it. (that’s what this picture is about →)



My painting shows an old, rusty, outdated playground in the court between old apartment buildings. The building on the left is a North Korean one, with a propaganda message on its top, while the building on the right is one of the “doomed”, old South Korean apartment building, with external aircons; nowadays, going to be torn down. The green building in the back is inspired by the “Chungjeong Apartment” the oldest of Seoul/Korea, which also is scheduled to be destroyed this year.

Many people had been living there, many children had been playing there, - getting older and have left. **What became of them?**

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